AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented) A method for guiding and supporting a thin sheet metal or metal strip (1) during transport across a conveying device (10) and through drums selected from the group consisting of a transport drum and a blade carrier drum during, before or after a cutting process carried out by shears (3), the method comprising the steps of:

guiding a liquid or gaseous medium under pressure through supply channels (4) in an interior of the drums (7, 8) to jet nozzles (5) at a periphery of the drums (7, 8) and producing jet bundles (2, 2') of the liquid or gaseous medium exiting from the jet nozzles (5);

loading at a slant or at a substantially perpendicular angle relative to the sheet metal or strip (1) at least an underside of the sheet metal or strip (1) with

the jet bundles (2, 2') before support areas of the drums (7, 8), behind support areas of the drums (7, 8), before and behind support areas of the drums (7, 8) or as closely as possible adjacent to blades (6) provided on the blade carrier drums (8) and thereby supporting and guiding the sheet metal or strip (1) by impulse energy provided by the jet bundles (2, 2'), the blade carrier drums and the blades being part of the shears;

limiting the jet bundles (2, 2') oriented against the sheet metal or metal strip (1) to a limitable angular position of the drums (7, 8) using a valve (9).

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the valve (9) is arranged at an end face of the drums (7, 8).

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of detecting a strip head or a strip cut and loading the strip head or strip cut only briefly with the jet bundles (2, 2').

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the jet nozzles of the transport drums are

briefly successively loaded with the liquid or gaseous medium during a pass of the strip head between the transport drums.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the shears are chisel shears having the blade carrier drum (8) provided with a cutting chisel (11) and a counter drum (8') formed as an anvil, wherein the sheet metal or strip (1) to be cut is loaded with at least one of the jet bundles (2, 2') out of the blade carrier drum (8) and the counter drum (8'), respectively.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the jet bundles (2, 2') load the sheet metal or metal strip from above and below at at least one location selected before the cutting plane (y-y), before and behind the cutting plane (y-y), or behind the cutting plane (y-y).

17. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the shears are shearing-off shears (13) provided with the blade carrier drums (8, 8') each having a blade (6, 6') with an edge, the blades being arranged so that the edges are oppositely positioned, wherein the jet bundles

(2, 2') load the sheet metal or strip (1) from above and below at at least one location selected before the cutting plane (y-y), before and behind the cutting plane (y-y), or behind the cutting plane (y-y).

18. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

determining entry of a strip head (16) of the sheet metal or strip (1) in the area of the guide wedge (15) arranged stationarily upstream of the chisel shears (3) and determining an advancing speed of the strip head (16) by a signaling device (19);

arranging at least one row of jet nozzles (5) in the guide wedge (15) and loading and guiding the strip head (16) from below by orienting the jet nozzles (5) such that jet bundles (2') exiting from the jet nozzles (5) impact approximately perpendicularly against the sheet metal or strip (1).

19. (Currently amended) A device for guiding and supporting a thin sheet metal or metal strip (1) for performing the method according to claim 11, the device comprising:

a conveying device (10) for conveying the sheet metal or metal strip;

drums selected from the group consisting of transport drums and blade carrier drums (7, 8);

the drums each having a periphery provided with jet nozzles (5) arranged in at least one row parallel to an axis of the drums;

wherein the drums each have an interior and supply channels (4) arranged in the interior, wherein the supply channels (4) are connected to a source (25) of a medium to be supplied under pressure, wherein the source (25) is provided external to the drums (7, 8);

wherein the jet nozzles (5) are connected by connecting channels ~~members~~ (21, 21') to the supply channels (4) and~~, when supplied with the medium,~~ are oriented against at least one of a top surface and a bottom surface of the sheet metal or the metal strip;

at least one pump (22) and at least one valve (9) arranged between the supply channels (4) and the source (25), the valve including the connecting channels ~~members~~.

20. (Previously presented) The device according to claim 19, wherein the valve is arranged at an end face of each of the drums (7, 8).

21. (Withdrawn) The device according to claim 19, wherein the conveying device (10) is a rolling table (10), wherein the blade carrier drums form chisel shears (3), and wherein guide wedges (15) are arranged near the chisel shears and comprise jet nozzles (5) and supply channels (4) for the medium, the device further comprising:

a media supply line (29) comprising a pressure pump, connecting the jet nozzles to the source (25);

a signaling device (19), monitoring entry of the sheet metal or metal strip, arranged above the sheet metal or metal strip (1), wherein the signaling device (19) is connected by a control signal line (26) to a motor of the pump (27) and communicates with the signal line (26) with the motor (28) of the pump (27).

22. (Withdrawn) The device according to claim 21, wherein a width of the jet nozzles (5) is adjustable.

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23. (Withdrawn) The device according to claim 21, wherein the conveying device is a rolling table and wherein the jet nozzles are distributed radially on a periphery of the transport drums.